192 805 According to my Tapirapé informants, "today" is ĭn, "tomorrow" is ãntxeivé, "yesterday" is designated by the number antxepé, "one," and "day before yesterday" by mõkóimi, "two." [Ed., the remainder of the paragraph is omitted.]

Among the Tapirapé, the exact and numerical reference to a past event seldom goes farther back than mõkóimi, "day before yesterday," since as a rule they do not count to mãpit, "three," preferring to say vuaitépe, "much "(in quantity), or mõ (or mũ), "far away" (a word that designates great distance, in space as well as [93] time, and that is perhaps related to mõmbĭri, "far away," in Montoya). Concerning the future, on the other hand, they frequently say ãntxeivé, "tomorrow," although they may be referring to a time later than the following day.

805 Since not only the computations of time but its direct denominations as well are invariably abstract, however, it is more convenient to the Tapirapé mentality to use mostly indirect designations by grounding the references to past and future times in concrete phenomena. [821] Thus, they indicate the time of day by extending their hand in the direction of the place where the sun was or will be at the time in question. [171] By what I saw, and also by what Krause (p. 339) mentions, the Karajá [Caraja] proceed in the same fashion.

If certain events took place several weeks or months earlier, the [824] Tapirapé pinpoint them chronologically by showing with the hand the degree of development of certain plants at the times in question, for example, the height of maize or sugar cane. If several years [856] have gone by, the Tapirapé narrator extends his hand to the height that a certain person had reached at that time. This person is usually the narrator himself, if his age enables him to do so. If he is about 50 years old and thus stopped growing dozens of years ago, but wishes to indicate an event that occurred five years earlier, he will use a child five years old or older.

805 823 [192] It should be mentioned, finally, that the words kaém, "daybreak," and kanúk, "nightfall," are also used for purposes of orientation in geographical space, the former meaning "east" and the latter "west." Judging by the explanations given to me by the Tapirapé, the concepts of "north" and "south" are lacking among them.